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Author: Judy Skutch-Whitson

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Interviewee: Judy Skutch Whitson

Interviewer: Bruce Fetzer

Attendees: Judy Skutch, Bruce Fetzer, Tom Beaver, Priscilla Massie(PM), Jimyo Ferworn

Topic: Judy Skutch-Whitson – 1975 introduction to Course in Miracles

Bruce I just turned the Genesys recorder on. This is Thursday, March 3, 2011, oral history with Judy Skutch and on the call we have—

Priscilla Priscilla Massie.

Tom Tom Beaver.

Bruce Bruce Fetzer, Jimyo, and, of course, our star—

Judy Judy Skutch Whitson. I love that—a star at my age. That's delightful.

Bruce Judy, thanks again for really taking the time to reflect on this, and for providing very critically important information about the early development of the Institute and your relationship with John Fetzer. We've covered a rich history already, and we left off at one of the main items here, which is the transition into and the introduction into A Course in Miracles itself. I don't know, Tom, if you wanted to give any more of an intro into it at this point or if we just turn the floor over to Judy?

Tom Well, I think Judy's got this all laid out.

Judy Well, I hope I do.

Tom I couldn't possibly do it better than Judy can do herself.

Bruce You gave us a very rich recap of everything leading up to this and now, on with the main event. You have the floor.

Judy I have just a couple things to say. I hope you don't mind that I've pulled out all the stops. I think it's much, much too much information, but if that is better, to err on the side of being too wordy, I'm definitely doing that.

Tom Nobody can fill this in but you, Judy, so the more the merrier. No holds barred.

Judy Today particularly I hope you will feel free to interrupt me, because in dealing with A Course in Miracles and John Fetzer—which is the fulcrum of today’s discussion, and possibly of the whole memoir, that was John’s and my biggest connection. Everything I’ve told you so far was just leading up to it, and setting the stage. The context was *extremely* important, to know what was going on at that time, because you see John better in light of it.

Today I’m going to be going into how he first met Helen and Bill, and then our early discussions. Now, how can I remember our early discussions 35 years ago? Of course I *can’t*, and thank goodness. A while back I was told by Rob Lehman, and then it was reiterated by Bruce, that John’s original copy of A Course in Miracles was found amongst his things. I don’t know if it was in his library or in his room, but his original copy was the very first edition (which, by the way, is now a collector’s item) of A Course in Miracles; it has his prodigious notes in tiny, almost indecipherable handwriting. I asked Bruce if he could send me a sampling, and he sent me the Table of Contents of the text. Well, we would think that’s not very much to go by, the Table of Contents. The *meat* of the Course is the book itself; he wrote in the margins and he underlined things many times. But just from that particular Table of Contents, it jogged my memory to the extent that I didn’t think it would be possible.

It wasn’t that I remembered specific conversations, because that would be inaccurate; but I did remember the gist of the kinds of discussions we had, and the kinds of questions he was asking, particularly to Bill Thetford, because Bill was very easy to understand. He was erudite but not in an intellectual way. He was very comfortable to be with and folksy, and I think John really enjoyed his company. He was also as tall as John, which helped. I may be going into too much depth here today; that’s why I’m asking your indulgence, and you can stop me at any time.

One thing more before we begin: I remembered something the other day and I need to put it in here before A Course in Miracles and John. This was just a little vignette that impressed me so much about John, and really gives a sense of who he is. I don’t think any of you are going to remember the date that I’m talking about, but I remember it very, very well. It was August 9, 1974 and John was visiting me in New York; and a bunch of people had come over also, whom he wanted to meet and see. Most of them were professors, academicians, people in research. I had maybe 30 or 40 people around, and we got notice that President Nixon was going to be resigning and giving his resignation speech. Those of you who know history or those of you who were there, this was a time that was fraught with a tremendous amount of tension. The whole country was up in arms. I don’t know how many people were supporting Nixon, but he was in disgrace over the war in Viet Nam. It was just

a disaster, and I myself had no part in that politically. I had opinions, because my son was about to turn 18, and I was in a panic [that he might be drafted]. Nixon resigning meant the war would be over, and it was like liberation for the country, no matter what your politics. I would say that most of the people in my apartment that day would have been considered liberal. We rushed to the television, everyone was crowding around it, and we listened to the very short resignation speech. It was *stunning*. We were witnessing history. Everyone was aware of it.

Then people started to jump up and down, scream and yell, as if they were at a ball game and their team had just won. When the fury had piped down a little bit and the celebration seemed to have calmed, very quietly John said, "I was with him in the White House recently, and he's such a sad man." He said, "You know, he could be extremely kind and he certainly loved his children, and his daughters were there and Pat; and we had such a nice, really intimate time." He said, "I feel so sorry for him," and he had tears in his eyes. There was absolute quiet. No one had thought of the humanity of the moment, but John had. I just thought I would tell you that.

Tom Yes, great story.

Judy I don't think anyone has ever heard that before, but it had to do with mind changing; and it really goes directly into John knowing, knowing that there had to be a better way. We were all demonstrating one way, which was divisive, separating, competitive, angry, and then joy in someone's downfall. John was demonstrating something totally different, a much broader aspect. And I thought, this was a man who was really ready for what was about to happen to him. I will tell you why.

I left off where I took home the 1,500- page typewritten manuscript [of A Course in Miracles] that Helen Schucman and Dr. William Thetford had handed me in their office. Also there that day, at the same time, was Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, who was a very important part of the story.

Tom Will you say what year this is?

Judy I received the Course May 29, 1975.

Tom My birthday.

Judy Is it? Well, I'll never forget your birthday now.

It was exactly noon when I met them, and it was probably two o'clock when I received the Course, and I took it home with me. I said Dr. Kenneth Wapnick was with them.

Briefly, Kenneth Wapnick he figures very much in this tale. Ken Wapnick was then a 33-year old psychologist who had done his doctoral dissertation on Saint Teresa [of Avila] and schizophrenia and mysticism. Helen and Bill were told about him, and looked at an article that he had written, which was probably the short form of his thesis. They were kind of interested, because they didn't know *any* psychologist who ever professed the least bit of interest in mysticism.

Schizophrenia was the subject of his study, but he was finding that what some people call schizophrenia could also be an aspect of mysticism, or perhaps the line is blurring. Helen and Bill felt that they probably should meet this young man. The friend who had called their attention to the article was a Catholic priest, and Father Benedict Groeschel eventually became very high up in the Catholic church. He was in charge of the spiritual rejuvenation of the Catholic priesthood and the Archdiocese of New York at the time; but he also was a psychology student, a doctoral candidate under Helen and Bill; and they did show him a few of the pages of the Course as it was being transcribed, which he thought were quite beautiful. I also met him because he was teaching at New York University, when I was, a course on Christian mysticism.

I consulted him a couple of times, not realizing that we both knew the same people; it was Father Benedict Groeschel who introduced Ken Wapnick in person to Helen and Bill. That story is much too long and can be found in any of the books written by Ken Wapnick. It'll say that he knew instantly when he saw that manuscript that that was his life's work. Although he was just preparing to be a monk and to go to Gethsemane, and live in relative silence, he left the church, he left everything, and he came to be with Helen and Bill. By some miraculous happenstance, they managed to have a place for him in their own office. That turned out to be extremely necessary, because as Ken started to study this material to which he was attracted and felt it was his life's work, he realized that it needed editing.

There were no paragraphs, there were no titles, there were no chapter headings, and it had to be done. Bill couldn't get Helen to do it because she was just fed up. Ken was new blood that came in, and he was young, very attentive, and very intelligent. He finally coaxed Helen into going back into the mode of taking down transcription or being a 'scribe', as she called it. She would never say she wrote A Course in Miracles. She would always say she was 'the scribe'. Other people might use the term channeling, but she didn't like that. It sounded too psychic, New Age, airy-fairy. She said 'the scribe'; that was what the voice told her, You are 'the scribe'. Ken helped 'the scribe focus', to go through the whole Course once again: putting it into a form that was definitely more readable; giving it chapter headings and paragraph headings; and breaking it down into sections that were logical. It was quite a job and took two and a half years. The manuscript that I was handed had a lot of work

that had been put into it after the original scribing by Helen, once again with Ken's prodding and Ken's typing.

Bruce Were there any edits to it, or was it complete?

Judy Oh, yes. This is the way I can describe it best: you know when there's a faucet that hasn't been used in a long time, in a summer cabin, and you turn on the faucet, and at first rusty water comes out and then it flows a little purer and a little cleaner, and finally you get nice fresh water? Bill Thetford described Helen's mediumship in just that way. He said in the beginning they didn't know what they were doing. They would stop and ask questions about Uncle Harry, or about a client that they had, or about someone in their department. It was all a mishmash. Then maybe a paragraph or two of the Course would come through, and then something else.

They did not know the process yet, what they were doing. They just found that there was an inner voice that Helen listened to very clearly, and they could interact with it. After the first hundred pages of the Course, which were kind of a mess, it started to come quickly, so clearly and so cleanly, *because* Helen became a knowing scribe. She started to know what she was doing, and the trivialities and the dross of it were eliminated. But the first hundred pages were very definitely edited.

The editing process was not Helen editing a manuscript as she would a speech of hers or a paper. That was a very painstaking job for her when she edited her own work or Bill's for their professional life. This editing was done under Ken's prodding and supervision, and Helen would ask the voice everything. Should I keep this in? Should I take that out? Give me another phrase for this. Until it came in the form in which they gave it to me.

Bruce When you said the first hundred pages, are you talking about the text, the workbook, or the manual?

Judy The text came first and that was about 650-something pages. Then there was a break, and Helen rested. About three months later she said to Bill, "You know, I think I'm going to do something strange again," and he said, "What is it?" And she said, "I think it's called a workbook for students." Sure enough, in about a week or so she started bringing forth the workbook for students, which had no edits whatsoever. Finally, after another rest of a few months, she brought forth what we call a manual for teachers.

The Course consists of three books. One is the theory embodied in the text: the belief system, it not just the theory. The second is a workbook, which is practical, is a lesson a day for a year to be applied, based upon the principles of the text. And the third is a manual for teachers. Not for a teacher to teach one, but to connect with the inner teacher inside, which we all have. The Course

then could be called a metaphysical system of spiritual psychotherapy. Interesting, because these were two psychotherapists, three when Ken joined them. It was also a metaphysical system. It was totally opposite of anything they had ever been taught, or anything they ever were teaching themselves.

It was Metaphysical in the sense that it was non-dualistic, whereas they believed in, were teaching, and were working and living in a duality. The body is real. This world was created by God, or from the big bang theory; that we're born into these bodies and perhaps we have something called a soul or spirit. Some people believe we do, but that is another part of the invisible: we can't really prove it. At the end, as bodies we die.

The Course is just the opposite. It throws the whole theory on its head, and it says, You're mistaken. This is not the way reality is. I'm not going to get into all of that now, because I'd rather do it in the narrative with John. But you can see that what I took home that first night was a very complex document.

I stayed up through the night reading it, not studying it, just reading it, and I didn't get more than a third of the way through. I found it intense, poetic, Biblical in language which surprised me a lot. The sentence structures were at times archaic, obtuse, convoluted, and I found it hard going. That was the text. On the other hand, the workbook was extremely simple to read and very eloquent, and the manual for teachers was just up my alley. In fact, I wanted to read that first, because it helped define how we all have that inner voice we can turn to. No one is without it. It explained how we can recognize it better, how we can actually test it, and live our lives by it.

I knew just a bit about the Course from my reading during the night, but I knew absolutely that I would never look at another document again with the same kind of admiration and awe with which I had examined that. Part of me knew, absolutely knew, that this was going to be my way. I couldn't explain why this complex document caught me so. I liked poetry, and a good bit of it is in iambic pentameter, which was very familiar to me. A lot of the passages were almost Shakespearian, very lofty in style, and I love good literature. I knew that I knew it. I can't really explain that. I just didn't know specifically how I knew what I knew. The very first night I was looking at it, the memory of my first childhood mystical experience came back to me; I had actually uttered the words over and over again in a dream or a vision,: "Now you know, now you know, now you know."

As a little child I didn't know what that meant, except I felt the sense of knowing that went far beyond anything in the physical universe. There seemed to be to me that night a deep connection between this document and my recent plea, about ten days before, to the universe, "Won't someone up there please help me?" Out of desperation I was calling for another way but didn't know it. Looking at this document, I saw a direction, and that this direction connected

to just about all my inner questions. There was an absolute certitude at that point that this Course in Miracles would give me a way to find my map home.

When I say these words it sounds corny, but I think people know what it means. When I watched the movie E.T. and would talk about it in my classes, everyone was moved by this little figure with the Einstein eyes, saying “E.T. phone home.” All E.T. wanted to do was go home, and everyone wanted him to be able to get home. It was so dramatic and so touching to people, because deep within we all know that this world is not our real home, that there is another home deep within us that is accessible. We want to find out how to access it. With the many class discussions I had about the theme in E.T., I noticed how many people resonated to it without being able to articulate it. For me it was yes, this is probably, most likely, maybe definitely, my map home to that place of deep inner peace where I can feel safe. I know it exists. I’ve had experiences of it, and it is not this world. It doesn’t look like this world. There’s no form and no perception. There’s only that deep knowing.

Naturally, I called Helen and Bill the very next morning, and I arranged to meet with them and Ken Wapnick after work, at my husband’s and my apartment in New York City, which was about 20 minutes from their office. For any of you know New York City, we lived on 81st and Central Park West and they were on 165th Street and Broadway and all they needed was to hail a cab and come down, maybe a 20-minute ride in no traffic. They started to do this every day, and that began a pattern of almost daily meetings for the next few years.

Meanwhile, I was warned by them not to show this document or tell anyone about it or where it came from. Helen and Bill were very protective of their professional reputation; they knew very well that if anyone was to find out that these two super scientists had brought forth a mystical document, they would lose it quickly. They obviously knew or felt that they were to be sharing this with me. But they were kind of leery about exposing their vulnerability as scientists with this metaphysical document to others. As they reminded me, just read the introduction. I had read it over and over again, and since it was possibly John’s favorite part in the Course and in the copy that he owned he had underlined every single word, I think that he would want me to read it to you. This is the very short introduction of A Course in Miracles.

“This is A Course in Miracles. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time. The Course does not teach the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love’s presence which is your natural inheritance. The opposite of love is fear, but what is all encompassing can have no opposite. This course can, therefore,

be summed up very simply in this way. Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.”

I just had to read that into our record, because John so specifically underlined every single word, and would talk to me about that introduction which he said, when he first read it, was the whole essence of the Course. He knew right away that the rest of the book would be the unfolding of those ideas.

Bruce I can share that when John introduced me to the Course, we focused on that introduction.

Judy It’s almost unintelligible when you read it for the first time, but it is kind of beautiful. The funny thing is, Helen told me when she first took it down she thought it was gobbledygook. She called up Bill and she said she was frightened about what was going on, because this didn’t sound like English. She brought it in the morning and she read it out loud to him, from her shorthand notes. He typed it up and he looked at it, and he said, “Helen, it’s very beautiful.” He said, “It’s very intense.” He said, “It has all our answers in it,” because he had asked for a better way. There must be a better way of living and working in this world than the way we’re living. As soon as he heard it, he felt that this was the answer to his question, is there a better way? There must be a better way.

I think it was kind of overwhelming to Helen at the onset, but Bill resonated to it very, very quickly. You can imagine that I wanted to call John right away; I had to prevail upon Helen and Bill for a while before I got permission to send John the manuscript. I had to explain who he was, his great interest in spiritual knowing, how old he was; how he had searched for so many years, and how I had worked with him. I didn’t realize at the time that was a preparation for either of us, but we sort of brought each other through the preparation for the Course. I identified him as a man of great integrity, and that he wouldn’t betray them. Again, I was reminded that Helen wanted anonymity. She didn’t feel like she should be a spokesperson for the Course, because she didn’t practice it. At the same time, she said, “The world has enough cults. I don’t want to be one of them,” and that this is not a religion. It was a great deal, talking her into letting me send him the manuscript. Once I got the permission to send him the manuscript, then I also had to promise her that John wouldn’t share it with anyone. I called him and I found out, much to my chagrin, that John wasn’t at the office. He would be away for quite a while, and—Bruce, who was John’s secretary then? Do you remember?

Bruce Wilma Bertema.

Judy I knew her on the telephone, but not as a friend. We didn’t have a relationship, but she did know that John and I had a close friendship and a working relationship. She knew what it was about because she was the only other

person he shared those things with. I prevailed upon her to tell me, is he traveling? What's going on? This is what I remember, and it feels right to me: She told me he had had a heart attack, that no one was to know, that the doctor said he was coming along well, and he was recovering at his ranch in Tucson. I said I had something really important to tell him. Was it possible I could reach him? I did not have his phone number in Tucson. John was so private and he guarded all those things so carefully. She said, "I have to talk to him tomorrow anyway; I will tell him, and we'll see what happens."

Sure enough, two days later I got a call from John. "What's up?" He sounded a little bit subdued, but certainly strong and intellectually very curious. I told him about what had happened. I briefly gave him the background of how this Course came to Helen, and he could scarcely contain his enthusiasm. He said, "Send it to me right away, right away." Since I didn't have a private plane at that time to send it overnight, and there was no FedEx, all I could do was send it to him by Special Delivery. I told him, please don't share it with anyone. I don't think he was about to share it with Rhea anyway. He was kind of isolated where he was, and he understood the need for anonymity for Helen and Bill, because he himself had need for anonymity in many different cases. When I would visit him, he was very careful that nobody would know who he was or where he was. I think that his sensibilities were really touched by that request of Helen, and I could reassure her and Bill that he would keep this promise.

Things were happening so fast in those days. I was so caught up with my new 'family', that I scarcely noticed I didn't hear from John for a couple of weeks. When I finally spoke with him, it was a conversation so full of emotion, and I just listened. John told me he had read through the entire document—I hadn't done that yet—and it was exactly what he had waited for all his life. That's a pretty strong statement to make, and one that I would not forget. He used to call me sweetheart, and he said, "Sweetheart, you know, I've looked here and I've looked there and I've poked under all sorts of debris," as he called it, "and I have found some nuggets of gold in some of the ancient wisdoms and the perennial philosophies, but I have never, ever, ever imagined I would find it all in one place, and written just for me." That's what touched me very much, that he felt it was for him as well as I felt it was for me.

We were going to have a whole new world opened to us, and we would be sharing at a completely different level. He also said that so much of the essence of what he was reading in the Course was consistent with what he had come to believe over the years. He said he felt it was the synthesis of all the ideas that he always suspected was truth, but that he had never found such a thought system in a single place. Interestingly, he had no problem accepting the concept that this material was actually a metaphysical system of spiritual psychotherapy. That is a mouthful to say, but it describes it very well; the reality it discussed, our reality, was definitely a metaphysical one. There was

no problem there for him. His inner experiences and his vast reading of spiritual literature from both East and West, it seems, had already prepared him to recognize that the life we think is real seems very real indeed, but it's more like a collective dream. He said he knew already that we were always spirit and the big thing was we needed to remember. He said, "Here is the book that will help me get there."

All in all, it was the headiest conversation I had ever had with John up until that time, and it was really a memorable one. That took place before the end of 1975, and we talked about it a little bit more on the telephone a few times. While he was still in Tucson, he would tell me what he was up to, that he was going to start the lessons. I would tell him what was happening at our house with Helen and Bill and Ken, and how we all interacted, as well as some of the things we discussed and some of the things I found problematic. At this point John became a teacher, because he had been cogitating about these ideas for so many years, much more than I. He started to bring into his essence his own strength as a teacher or a leader. He would say, "Oh, Sweetheart, that means this or that," or "Don't you remember when we . . ." It was just wonderful to behold. Whereas in the first part of our relationship, I was his teacher of parapsychology consciousness research, what was going on in the world in that field, now it just flipped and he became my older friend-teacher through experience, and from all his reading of the document we were sharing together.

- Bruce What were some of the early questions or conversations? Typically, when you're introduced to a new material or thought system, there's a period of understanding and then integration. What's the nature of the conversation?
- Judy I will come to that. I'm going to go a little bit slow, to give myself the chance to reconstruct and sort of feel the memory, rather than just recall it. Do you know what I mean?
- Bruce That's perfect.
- Judy I want to get into what they might call it in the theater: Method acting.
- Bruce Yes.
- Judy I'm going to have to discover a little method acting here, so I can feel those talks again and not make any mistakes.
- Bruce I won't interrupt anymore. Go ahead.
- Judy No, I don't mind. I have very good guidance with those pages that you sent me, because things are underlined and doubly underlined, with exclamation points. I can say, 'This is what he was interested in' with clarity, because I have it in his own handwriting.

Bruce Right.

Judy This is what I'm going to try to do. I put together some notes, trying to put them all in a form; but it's really more notes than in prose, and I'm going to try to feel them and I'll talk them and see what happens, okay?

Bruce Sure.

Judy First of all, John was so fascinated with the process of channeling. He always had been, and he was fascinated with the people who seemed to be conduits of higher truth. He wanted to meet Helen and Bill right away. His health had much improved, and he thought in a month or two he'd be able to come to New York again, and spend time getting to know them. He already had a whole list of questions for Helen. I asked Helen if she were willing to meet with John, and she said succinctly, "No." I thought, I'd better wait a while and see if she might change her mind. Perhaps someone like Ken or Bill might convince her to change her mind. But she said, "No," adamantly no, she wouldn't.

I dropped the subject, but in a few weeks I received a letter from John, who was already back at work. I really wish I still had that letter in my archives, so I could include it in this account; but sometime around our move from New York City to California in 1978, all my correspondence files disappeared. They were packed up to move with us and they never arrived. You can image what a wrench it was for me. It was all my work for five years, all my correspondence, all the reading notes I had taken, all the notes from lectures, all my New York University preparations for my classes. I was devastated, but it was one of my early lessons in having to let go; up to this date, except for maybe that letter, there isn't one thing that I miss. But I did lose that letter.

I'll try to reconstruct it as best I can, because the part that matters is the part that I'll never forget. John wasn't very chatty, as those of you who knew him could say. He might have been more chatty with Tom, but I didn't find him a small talker, either in person or in correspondence. The letter he sent me just started, Dear Judy, and he told me when he could get away to come to New York for a visit, how much he wanted to see Helen. He told me he wanted to meet the 'scribe'. He wrote only about a sentence about his intense fascination with the Course that she had brought forth. Then he signed it, "Hope to hear from you soon, Love John."

There was a P.S. at the end of this letter, which was strange to me. He stated that he was going to be very busy on the trip that he was going to take to New York, and he was doing other things, too; but he was sure he could 'shoehorn a visit in'. Most of us have heard the expression shoehorn it in. It means "I'll try to get it in my schedule." It's very tight but I'll do my best, like a tight shoe is when you try to get your foot in and, that's what a shoehorn is used for. But

whoever says it. It was a surprise, but since I knew how enthusiastic he was to see Helen, I thought I would show her his letter. We were at home in my living room where we always met, and talking about other things; I brought up the fact that John Fetzter really did want to come. She was shaking her head 'no' before I completed the sentence; I said, "He wrote to me that he was really interested in meeting you, Helen, and I think you should read it yourself." I showed her the letter. Ken and Bill were sitting next to her and she read the letter. She seemed so startled she could hardly speak. In a loud voice she said, "It is he, it is he!" Well, I should stop right there. Helen was so particular about grammar, so punctilious. She would never say, "It's him." Most of us would say, "It's him." She said, "It is he, it is he!" And she burst into tears, letting the letter drop to the floor.

I was astonished. I knew nothing about what was going on, but Bill picked up the letter and he burst into laughter. Ken read it, too, and they explained to me about a dream that Helen had had years before. I think it was in 1945, and this was 1975. That dream was very mysterious and powerful to her, and she had written it down. And at this point keep in mind that my 'new family', these three faculty members of Columbia Presbyterian School of Physicians and Surgeons, were all well trained and very intelligent psychologists; they were quite familiar with dream symbology. Much later, after Helen's death, Ken Wapnick, who was her very close friend, and also her authorized biographer, wrote about this dream in his book called **Absence from Felicity**.

He told how powerful this dream was. In this dream, she entered a small rectangular room, and she discovered someone sitting there on a high stool who looked like a clerk writing on a large ledger. She asked him if she could pose a question; seemingly he was very busy, and he was quite curt with her; he told her he would entertain only one question. She was so discombobulated by his attitude that she couldn't even think of a question. She asked him what kind of a book he was writing. He told her it was an account of people's lives, and he told her that everyone has a page. She was really interested. At this point, I think I will just read this to you, because it is very important with John's relationship with Helen. She said to the clerk, "I know I'm a terrible nuisance, but I was wondering if you could tell me, am I in this book?" He said, "Everyone is in this book, but I guess I'll have no peace until I tell you." Helen said, "You mean, you decide whether people have been good or bad and things like that?" "Dear me, no," answered the clerk. "I mainly record facts. Good and bad mean nothing to me. They may concern the Authorities, of course." That's a capital A. "I wouldn't know. It's not my department." "I was just thinking," Helen said, speaking very casually, "I mean, how would you say my page looks?" "I wouldn't know yet," answered the clerk without much interest. "Your account hasn't been closed as yet." "I know, I know, but there must be some figures on it already. I was sort of wondering what you think about it so far? Do you think it will shape up all right?" she asked anxiously. "I never indulge in speculation," replied the clerk. "In my work it

would be a waste of time. Over and over I see a person suddenly decide to do something very unexpected, something that changes the whole picture of his accounts. He's quite likely to do it up until the very last minute. Therefore, I have given up speculating beforehand; and afterwards, of course, guessing is no longer necessary. I'll tell you one thing though," he said, wheeling suddenly around towards Helen, and speaking with unaccustomed emphasis. "Your final account will be determined very largely on what you decide to do with that shoehorn." "Shoehorn?" she gasped. "What shoehorn? What are you talking about? I don't know what on earth you're talking about." The clerk looked straight at her. "I think you do," he said very quietly. "Oh yes, I think you do. However," he went on, his voice returning to his former matter of factness, "to me it won't matter either way. It seemed charitable to mention it, since I have an idea you don't realize its importance. As for me, I will duly record your decision when you make it, and there my concern with the matter will end. And now, if you'll excuse me, I will be getting on with my bookkeeping again after this long and rather futile interruption. Goodbye again."

That's what Ken wrote from Helen's own notes in his book about the shoehorn incident. You can imagine when I gave Helen the letter from John, and he writes, "P.S. I will try to shoehorn this in." I don't think she ever saw that phrase written that way either, and it connected immediately to her vision, dream we call it, of the clerk writing the accounts in the book. Need I remind us, they're psychologists, they know dream symbology, and all of this was 20 [30??] years of precursor. Well, not really. Ten years of precursor of Helen doing something unexpected. As the clerk said, "Sometime people do something very unexpected." Reading the account of her life now would be meaningless. "Your life's not over," and then everything would depend upon the shoehorn.

I think you can imagine the mixed feelings in the room when we were reading John's letter over and over again. Bill and Ken, because Helen was speechless, told me about that particular dream, and how important it was to her, so there was some kind of a signal here. John said later, "The universe picked a word, any old word, and gave it to me to write," because when I told John about it, and he came to visit, at that point he was in. She was going to see him no matter what. She said that she thought he might offer some clue to that dream.

When John did come and she asked him about why he wrote that, he looked at her because I hadn't mentioned that to him. It was just days away, and I hadn't got back to tell him something amazing happened about a shoehorn. So we all asked him when he came. We showed him the letter. Why did you write that? He looked and he said, "Damned if I know. I don't remember ever writing that." He said, "My process usually is to have a bunch of letters I have to write and I dictate them to my secretary, and then she comes in with them all typed and corrected and I sign them without looking at them. He said, "So I just

signed that letter. I don't ever remember saying, "Oh, put a P.S. in about a shoehorn." He said, "I don't know that I ever said it, although I'm sure my secretary didn't add it on her own". It was even more interesting to everyone, that this came through John, as if John were channeling something; it was a key to allow Helen to meet with him.

By the way, nothing every came of the shoehorn, as far as I know; John never bought her a gift of a shoehorn either. It seemed to me – and this is just me fantasizing—that Helen had the strange dream, there was this word in it that was an unusual word for her to dream about, and then John comes in 20 [30??] years later and really wants to see her. She doesn't want to see him and he writes the one thing in the letter that opened the doors. I'm happy with that interpretation that there wasn't anything beyond it, but who knows? We really don't know.

Well, there was that happy event. They did get together and, just as I suspected, it was like old friends or family again coming together. John was sitting on the couch with Helen, and if you have the picture that I asked to be sent to you then you can see him sitting there holding her hand. You don't meet someone 20 minutes ago and sit on a sofa and hold their hand. Most people don't. But you could already see that immediately there was a connection. This was the reason I wanted you to see the photograph. Telling you about it is one thing, seeing it is another. In the photo, Helen has this sweet expression on her face, which wasn't all that natural with her. She did have it sometimes, but in this case she was just all loving sweetness with John. He had been around the world many, many times, John had, and he would know authenticity when he came across it. He told me later the experience left him with a sense of such respect for the Course, because of the authenticity of Helen. He said, "I know that woman did not write this. I know that."

That meeting was really important. Their relationship was an interesting one, because he had a very busy life, and Helen had a very busy life; they weren't the kind of friends who called each other and chatted on the phone. Helen saw him a few more times. One day, I think it was '77, one day Helen told me in the morning that she was concerned about John. I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I think he's not well." That caught my attention, because she had a lot of insights, and she was a very fine psychic. I called up his office, and I found out that John wasn't in the office, that he was in Washington, D.C. on a trip. He hadn't told me he was taking a trip, because he didn't inform me where he was going often. D.C. wasn't near New York, not easily accessible anyway. I said, "What hotel is he staying at?" I was given the hotel, and I called up information and got the number.

When I asked for John Fetzer's room, it was the middle of the day, and he should have been at his business meetings. He answered the phone. He was very hoarse, he could hardly talk, and it seemed he had a very bad cold, which

he thought was turning into bronchitis. He had seen a physician in the hotel, and he was told just to stay in bed for a few days. It was bitter cold out, lightly snowing, and the forecast might have been even for a blizzard. When I reported to Helen that she was absolutely right, John wasn't feeling so well, she said something so uncharacteristic that I was stunned. She said, "Get your things together. We're all going down to see him." She didn't pick up and call the airport for a plane. We didn't do that in those days.

She meant we would go on the train, which meant a trek down to Grand Central Station in the snow. Helen hated the snow and hated the cold; then we would be sitting on the train for a good four-hour ride, then getting off and going to his hotel to see him. But that's what we did. We didn't stay overnight. Helen had to see John and sit with him; when we came there he was not really either in the mood to, or well enough to, chat with anyone. But he allowed Helen to be with him for about half an hour, and then we all left. We went back to New York, all in one day. That was kind of an odd trip, and on the way back I said to her, "What did you two talk about?" She said, "Oh, we weren't talking, dear, we were just working on healing him."

I thought that was an important story to tell you because it illustrates, number one, that Helen was connected to John at a very, very deep level; and that number two, she was called upon when he wasn't feeling well, and John's health was possibly precarious. I don't know how precarious that almost-bronchitis attack was, but he was well the next day. Possibly it was also to show all of us that the shoehorn was there to stay (chuckles). I could speculate on a lot of things, but in this narrative, it's important to note that they felt a very deep connection to each other. That was very gratifying for me because I felt I had been used for something very precious.

John could not have gotten so deeply involved in the Course, or even started to teach it himself to others, unless he'd gone straight to the top. John was a person who, if he needed to know something, he wouldn't ask someone in a library for information. He would go to the head of the corporation, or the group, or the school, or whatever the institution was, and ask the question direct. I used to tease him and say, "Yeah, John, go right to the President." Well, he had, many times, so it wasn't a far stretch; but at the same time, he had to know Helen. He had to know her at that level, in order for him to accept the teachings of the Course so completely as coming from the highest source, as he said.

I want to speak a bit about John's early use of the Course, and I think I'll start with just that. The highest source, initials, HS, Holy Spirit, higher self, and also Helen Schucman. John was very familiar with the concept that we all have an inner teacher, and that it's a direct access to the limitless, or that which we call God. He never felt that one has to go into a church and have a minister or a priest or a rabbi or a Noah [Knower??], or anyone connect you to the

source of all life. This had been a theme in his life, but with the Course it was a major theme. The Course is actually an instruction manual on how to be constantly in touch with your inner teacher, your higher guide, or your eternal knowing self, any name one wants to call it. It encourages the practice of asking questions and help of it, and listening for answers constantly. All the Course meditations are based upon that, that one gets in touch with one's higher teacher, and goes to that place of peace for one's information, for one's instructions, for one's wisdom.

John had no trouble with that whatsoever. In fact, he used to be fond of lecturing me about listening to, "Well, my guidance tells me that," and he wasn't kidding. He meant, I have asked in quiet and this is what I have felt an answer to be. John questioned Helen quite a bit about the voice. She never called the Voice anything but the Voice, with a capital V. John found out very quickly that this document, although it seemed to be Christian in nature, was actually given to Helen (or you can say dictated to Helen or presented to Helen) through her higher self, by that which the world calls Jesus; not the historical Jesus in the sense that we know of him through religion or history, but rather the spirit of unconditional love. The name it uses is the name that the world connects with forgiveness and love, and it's Jesus.

Helen was too upset and too embarrassed by that when I first asked her, Does the Voice have a name? She said, "I was afraid you were going to ask me that." I said, "Well, does it?" And she said, "Yes." And I said, "What does it say its name is?" She said, in sort of a snide way, out of the corner of her mouth, "He calls himself Jesus." I said, "Well, is it?" She said, "Oh, yes." She was of two minds about it, definitely. On the one hand she was embarrassed. On the other hand, she knew that that was indeed the Voice. That was not the least bit uncomfortable for John. He always wanted to go to the highest source.

For John there was no "Jesus" issue. For many people who study A Course in Miracles, or who don't study A Course in Miracles, there is; but John quickly realized in his discussions with Helen that the Course itself was not what one would think it would be if one studies the Bible. Because, although it made Biblical references, it certainly did not espouse some of the teachings that we have in Christianity or Judaism. When it came to the Voice, he needed to ask the most questions of Helen herself. A lot of the Course he could study himself and didn't need any teacher. He was his own teacher, and as he said, "I always have my higher teacher."

The question he asked her the most about was the Voice; and he said, "Do you hear it?" She had to say to him, "No, that's just a word or a phrase I use because it's easier for people to understand, but I don't hear it." He said, "What is it like?" She said, "It's more like thought impression. It's like the thought is there and I know it's not from me." He said, "Does it come quickly,

or do you see it in writing?” “No,” she said, “I would say hearing, but it’s not auditory. In other words, it doesn’t go through the regular channels like the ear. It’s more of my mind being willing to accept the words that I’m given.” She said, “It’s as if I was taking dictation, but again, there’s no sound coming. It’s all thought given to me.” This I remember. John was so pleased by it, because he said, over and over again to me, “That’s the way I hear, that’s the way I hear.” He said, “You hear a voice and people think you’re crazy, that you’re in the insane asylum; but that’s the way I hear. It’s a thought and I know it’s not mine. I know it’s my higher thought.” He added, “I feel so relieved, because it’s something I’ve always known and I’ve always followed, but now I know it’s correct.” Now he felt validation. He didn’t use that word, that was mine. He felt that his own inner hearing was validated by Helen.

Years after John died, someone sent me a tape. It was unlabeled, and it came with a letter which said, “Dear Judy, I was cleaning out a box of old tapes when I was moving and found this. I didn’t know what it was, and was going to throw it away because it had no name on it; but then I realized I had recorded this at a gathering, and that it must be your friend Helen speaking.” Helen would never allow anyone to record her. She didn’t like photographs and she would never do anything on video or film; it made it very difficult for me to trap her, ever, and often I would just take notes when she was writing. That she didn’t mind. This particular time I remember it was at a party. Bruce will remember who James Bolen was, the founder and editor of *Psychic Magazine*, and then it became a magazine called *New Realities*. For its field, it had a fairly wide circulation, because it was actually an attempt to really do some good writing about the whole field of consciousness; I still have my own library of every issue. It’s still eminently readable and very good for reference. John Fetzer is in that magazine too, by the way. He was interviewed. I don’t know if you have that, Bruce, but I think I’ll have to send it to you if you don’t—that interview, and it had to do with his own inner listening and making decisions.

Here was this tape that someone sent me, that he had recorded at a gathering where a lot of people were in the room. Music was on, people were snacking. There was a big buffet table. It was a party, and this man who had sent me the tape was a partner of James Bolen, the editor of *Psychic Magazine*; he wanted to do an article about Helen which she wouldn’t allow. He was very, very tall with white hair, extraordinarily handsome and full of charm; he batted his eyes at Helen and she batted hers right back at him. He sat next to her with his tape recorder and, somehow or other, he got her to tell him about the process of channeling. When I played it, I was beyond belief, ecstatic. It was the only recording we had of her, but it was terribly flawed, because of all the noise in the background. It was done on a very early, cheap little hand recorder, and I could hardly hear it. I waited about 15 years until the technology got good enough to be able to erase the background static and bring forward the voice.

Now I have a very fine and good recording of exactly what she said about the process of channeling, and it's almost word for word what I just told you.

Bruce One of the themes that we've been exploring is the progression in John's search from the early 80's all the way to the end of the 80's, up until his death, where he started out looking for confirmation outside of himself and really strongly transitioning towards going inside. He was developing a very robust meditation practice, finding multiple ways of going inside. Did you find then, all the way back into the 70's, that he actually was developing his own inner voice where he had confidence in anything that he perceived?

Judy I think he had always lived following his inner voice, but not with the specificity of acceptance that he developed later on. I know and you know, too, many cases in which he would turn to someone else to do a reading, channeling, the Ouija board, all sorts of things, until shortly before the Course came into his life. Looking back on it, I remember that we had talked more about inner guidance probably because of the people we met. Then I had had a dream that was very predictive, and I was extremely surprised by it. It was a precognitive dream.

I had spent a good bit of time at the dream lab in Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, where they were researching dreams; John started talking about the dreams that he had had that were important to him, in which he got guidance. After we found the Course, the questions that he was asking Helen about the voice were extremely important to him. He needed to find out how she felt about it, because there was instant respect; look what she had produced—the document. He just wanted to know that this was really the authentic real stuff, and it started to give him permission to accept his own inner listening, his own inner hearing, in a more bordered or boundary way.

In other words, instead of just having a hunch, sometimes he would call it a hunch or a flash of an idea that seemed to be resolving a problem that he was dealing with, he would say, "I don't know where that came from. It certainly had to come from my higher self." He started to make meditative time, to develop his own inner listening; we started the practice, when we were together, of saying some prayer from the Course, and then listening to what the voice said about a problem we had. In the years later, in the formation of the Board of Directors of the Institute, that was the way that John chose in asking who should be on the Board and who should serve. When we first started to meet together, that was one of the absolutes. We had to all meditate together. He wanted to see his Board approach problems with one mind, and ask the internal peace or the Holy Spirit, the higher self, for the direction.

Bruce Could we back up to John's interaction with Helen? You came into the Course in 1975, May of 1975, and had been meeting with Helen, Bill, and Ken for two

and a half years. When was it introduced to John Fetzer, probably in '77 or '78?

Judy Oh no. The Course was introduced to John two weeks after I got it.

Bruce Okay.

Judy He didn't have it maybe for a few days after that, but John had already met Helen before the end of '75.

Bruce So John got a hold of the Course.

Judy He was as new a student as I was.

Bruce He then met with Helen two to three times?

Judy I would say three to four times, maybe, he met with Helen.

Bruce At one of those occurrences he wanted to validate the authenticity of the source of the Voice?

Judy That's not what he said. He didn't say, "Now tell me that I can be sure that you're real and that this is a valid—you have a valid source." He knew already what the Course was, but he wanted to know the process by which she received it. He was discovering that he, himself, was capable of this process of inner asking. More than anything else, he wanted to make sure that Helen was indeed authentic. That was the word that he used to me: This woman is "authentic," ipso facto, the Course was authentic too.

Bruce One of the important parts of this story is documenting the nature of the type of information he would be looking for from psychics; I could imagine one of the things he would explore at one of his early meetings with Helen was about the Voice. What were some of the subjects in the follow-up meetings?

Judy Most of the subjects in the follow-up meetings were circular, meaning there was a coming together; it was not a class format, where Helen would be teaching John the Course or the rest of us anything. It was a discussion format. It was much more Socratic; we'd get on a subject and just talk about it; the subjects I remember quite well, because John himself has underlined them in his book.

I'm going to try to reconstruct not the meetings, but the kind of questioning and the understandings that were emerging. John certainly had lots of discussions about the contents of the Course with me, and then some with Helen and Bill. I could say safely that John liked best that the Course could be

explained simply as a spiritual path that focuses on peace and forgiveness. He was very clear that he was glad it was not a religion, that there are no rituals and no clergy, and that it's a Course of individual study and practice. He liked the idea that the Course stresses forgiveness and that that is the road to remember God.

John recognized that, although the Course does use some Christian terminology, it's certainly not conventional Christianity. John mentioned to me more than a few times that he noticed that there are many Biblical terms in the Course and references, but he said, "They have a very different meaning." He would ask Helen that: Does she ever study the Bible? No, she had not. "Well," he said, "There are very specific Biblical references here," and he would quote them, "but it's not the traditional meaning as presented in the Bible." And Helen would say, "Yes, that's true."

Although the Course uses the language of the Bible, the symbolism behind its use is very different from the Bible. An example that John liked, one that we discussed, was that the Garden of Eden was a pre-separation condition; it was a state of mind in which nothing was needed. He actually had me underline it in my book, because he had underlined this in his: "When Adam listened to the lies of the serpent, all he heard was untruth. You do not have to continue to believe what is not true unless you choose to do so. All that can literally disappear in the twinkling of the eye because it's merely a misperception. What is seen in dreams seems to be very real, yet the Bible says that a deep sleep fell upon Adam. Nowhere is there reference to his waking up. The world has not yet experienced any comprehensive reawakening or rebirth. Such a rebirth is impossible, as long as you continue to project or miscreate. It still remains within you, however, to extend, as God extended his Spirit to you. In reality, this is your only choice, because free will was given you for your joy in creating the perfect."

When John came across that, he called me up right away, very early in the Course, to say to me, "Did you see what that is?" I told him yes. "Well, underline it because I've underlined it." I underlined it. When we were with Helen and Bill, I must say that Bill was a tremendous part of this discussion. And although Helen was articulate about the Course and knew it perfectly, she didn't practice it. Bill, on the other hand, recognized its practicability; he knew it as well as Helen, and he did practice it.

There are many stories about that I won't go into. The idea that the Course was reinterpreting Christianity and Judaism was extremely powerful for John, because, although he was brought up traditionally Christian, he had always felt something was missing. Not that it was wrong to concentrate on love and forgiveness in your deep ethical and spiritual life, but rather that there was a lot of misperception in it: How could this be right? How could that be right? How could this be applied in today's world? The inequality of the world was

important to him. When he read this, he said it was very funny that the Bible says that a deep sleep fell upon Adam, and then the Course says ‘Nowhere is there reference to his waking up’. John said, “There, that’s the crux of it. That’s the crux of all inner sleep: We are in a joint dream and we can’t wake up until we actually acknowledge that we want to.”

We can’t wake up until we start practicing a road to get there, and the road is forgiveness. The forgiveness isn’t as the Bible has explained it. Turning one’s cheek is not the process of forgiveness in A Course in Miracles: As you’re struck on one cheek, turn the other. It is not that at all, but rather that we’re in a dream and it seems very real indeed, and yet this is not our identity. When you have a dream, whether it’s a nightmare or a pleasant dream, and you can recall it, you suddenly wake up. The dream is still in your mind. It’s so real that you’re not quite sure where you are. You look around. You’re in your bed and you say, “Oh, my God, that was a dream. It seemed so real.”

That was the way Helen explained it to John, who said he already knew. They were talking as two equals. Helen did not teach John. John more explored the things and the themes that he was interested in with Helen, and she would give him the point of view of the Course, not her point of view. She said, “This is not coming from me.” In hearing from Helen that the Course aims to correct the basic teachings of Christianity and Judaism, as found in the scriptures, was very, very powerful to him because, we’re talking about guilt and sin as not being real. What does that mean? Does it mean a murderer is to get away?

As I said, the Course is a system of non-duality and, yes, we are envisioning ourselves in a world in which there are many problems and certainly some joys, but this is not our reality. When the Course talks about our reality, the dream never happened. Like when you wake up in the morning and you’ve had a dream, and after about two or three minutes of remembering, you go about your way and you realize it never happened. Yet what was going on in your mind when you were sleeping? You were the scriptwriter. You were the author of the piece that you saw. You were the casting director. You were all the actors. You were the viewer or, you can say, the projectionist, and you were also the audience. You were everything.

That is the way that Helen and John one day talked about reality, that this is the dream of our making. Our mind is the most powerful instrument we can imagine, and our mind has chosen to go to sleep. Why it has chosen is irrelevant, because you can’t ask the impossible. If you’re in a dream you can’t ask why you’re dreaming. But that it is a dream is a theme that they explored, almost every time they were together, because John recognized that the world is driven by the idea of sin and guilt. If this is a dream, terrible things happen in a dream, but you wake up and they’re over. Is it possible, then, that this dream in which terrible things constantly happen, people are cruel to each

other, people murder, there are wars and there's famine ... when you awaken it's all gone? There is nothing, there never was to begin with.

That was probably one of John's favorite themes that he kept coming back to with me, over and over again. He kept saying, "See, we have the power of mind to awaken from that dream." The power of mind was essential for him; it was mind that was so powerful it had a flip side. When John went on a search for this experience in the desert, and used the drug LSD, what came out of that was so powerful. He heard himself speaking like the Course, although this was early in the Course. It was. He heard himself speaking with that kind of a voice of authority. He said afterwards, when we finally talked about it two years later, that he was overwhelmed by the power of his own mind; it made him, instead of being humbled, it made him — cautious may have been the word he used. He would talk about using his mind in a negative way, because he realized the power of it. He also likened it to possibly some past lifetimes, because he was interested in reincarnation. By the way, so were Helen and Bill; they talked a lot about reincarnation.

But at the same time, there were some things that he needed to sort out and get right. One doesn't need to be afraid of one's mind if one's mind is put into the service of God, or love, or something positive. It's not going to play tricks on you and hurt you; yet John kept saying that ego was a powerful so and so, that ego can really destroy. He recognized that the Course talked about us dreaming if you want, or living in a body with a mind that could choose either rightly or wrongly; that the ego was, in sense, our personality that was developed to forget our identity in God. We get so entangled in this world and this dream. We're so busy with it all that we don't remember what is home. That theme was very important to John, too, because he underlined that a lot.

It's where the idea was reinforced about inner peace, and that the understanding and the practicing of forgiveness was the road to inner peace and the remembrance of God. John once said to me, "You know, I read a lot." He probably read much more than I did in this field, too. "I read a lot, and this Course is unique among world spiritualities, because of the practice of forgiveness on the road to inner peace." Later on in his relationship with Helen and Bill and Ken and me, he was constantly talking about forgiveness, as if this was what he wanted to learn or remember most of all. I'm talking about the very early days.

I'm going to hold up a little, Bruce, because there's much more, and I don't know that you really need me to go into a tutorial on what the Course says. I'm just looking at John's notes, to see what he thought important, and I have many more of them.

Bruce Maybe what we ought to do is break at this point.

Tom Can I ask one question?

Judy Please do. Ask lots.

Tom Bruce is that all right?

Bruce Yes.

om Carolyn Dailey has said John told her, “The Course saved my life.” What do you think John meant by that? What changed so dramatically for him? What was it like before? What did the Course change it to?

Judy An excellent question, Tom. I certainly have not only heard him say that, but he once wrote me that, and he certainly told Helen that.

Tom A dramatic ... it’s a very strong statement.

Judy Yes, and I’ll tell you why. Bruce doesn’t seem to have any evidence of this, and I don’t know how to find this out. But I know that it would be unlikely for me to say John had cancer when he didn’t. He never told me. It would be unlikely for me to say John broke his leg and he didn’t ... John had a severe heart attack; that’s what happened to him right before I sent him the Course. I think that John, at that point in his life, was finished. One of his favorite sayings was from the Course: “No one dies without his own consent.” Now, *that* is a powerful statement. What does that mean?

These statements in the Course compressed; it’s only a few words, but when you hear them and think about them, you could go on thinking about them for days. books are written about them. “No one dies without his own consent.” John had said to me, at that time in his life he thought he was finished. When he had that heart attack, no one was supposed to know about it, because he didn’t want anyone in his professional life to know, for obvious reasons. As he said, “The old man was sick.” He was already 75 years old. Even his secretary didn’t want me to know where he was, and she didn’t tell me he had a heart attack. When she told him that I was looking for him, I think that he felt it was okay, that I would also keep this secret.

When I told him about the Course, I was very enthusiastic. I was jumping out of my skin when I was telling him this story. It was very new to me, and it was very amazing, full of mystery and wonder, and I was so taken with it. I felt it was an answer to my prayer, and so I was probably quite ebullient when I was telling him the story on the phone. In that conversation, when he said, “Send it to me immediately, immediately,” he said, “You sound as if you have been reborn.” I thought that was kind of a funny thing to say, because I didn’t feel that way, that I had been reborn; but I had been given a direction which I had been looking for and hadn’t seemed to find. You could say I’d been redirected,

or I had finally found something that I could devote my life to trying to learn and practice.

He seemed to already know what I was talking about. Maybe it was contagious, my enthusiasm, but we did know each other well enough for him to know that I wasn't exaggerating or lying. I was just happy, and when he got it, I did not hear from him for two weeks. When I did hear from him, there was such a change in his voice that I thought, my God, he's fine now. His voice was stronger, and when I had spoken to him before, his voice was very weak.

I had never had a heart attack, so I really didn't know what the results were. I never even knew anyone who had a heart attack. I didn't dismiss the fact that he had a heart attack, but I had no idea how terribly depressed you can get when you have one, when you experience it. Before you either have surgery or have a stent or something put in, you think well, Now's my time and I'm going. You make your peace at that moment, and you say, 'I didn't expect it this time, but it's okay. You know there's nothing much to hold me here.' When the Course came into his life, he had a dramatic reaction and said, 'Now I'm going to stick around. This is worth waiting for. This is worth being here for.' In that sense, that's what he meant when he said the Course saved his life. I think there was something physical, too. I don't think it was just an emotional reaction to some theory that he felt was a good thing for him to study. He had a visceral emotion, a reaction.

Bruce I would completely agree with that. John was a very powerful creator himself, and there were subsequent episodes in his life where his strong will and belief actually remedied physical ailments, a carotid artery incident, the work he did with Silva Mind Control. Other work that he did later in the '80's absolutely was very consistent with that; John would have a tool in his hand, talking about the power of the mind and his reframing, and then actually integrate that and use it first-hand. He would be first in line to test things out, so there's no question that this could have happened.

Judy There's no question about the power of his mind and the focus. Remember, Bruce, when he spent the time with the McGarey's at the A.R.E. Clinic?

Bruce Right.

Judy He had been quite ill. I don't remember what his illness was.

Bruce That was in the fall of 1984.

Judy He thought he was going then. He recognized that it was very possible that he was dying. He said, "You know, I'm in the middle of building the Institute, and I thought I'm not even going to live to see it complete." He said it was so aggravating. He was having so much trouble with this, and things were not

going smoothly. He was discouraged, and he was lying in bed thinking, “If this is the time, okay; it seems kind of funny but all right.” Then—am I allowed to say this story, Bruce?

Bruce Sure.

Judy It was when he was visited by Lloyd Swierenga and John’s eyes were closed. He was quite pale and quite ill. Lloyd took his hand, and John said he suddenly felt a jolt go through him and he could read Lloyd’s mind. Lloyd was thinking “Well, the old man’s finally checking out. It’s home free all for me.” And John said it was like a bolt of electricity that went through him. He said, “Never, never.” He said to me, “Sweetheart, I’d determined at that moment to get well and to get rid of . . .” So that was the power of John’s mind. He did too, didn’t he?

Bruce After that trip, Lloyd came back and proclaimed that he had been appointed Executive Vice President and that everyone reported to him. From that point forward Lloyd didn’t share any information with John, and no one was to talk to John.

Judy Right.

Bruce So that’s a whole other chapter to go into.

Judy I wasn’t there, and that isn’t my chapter, so I’m not even going to talk any more about it. I was talking about what John told me, and what a shock it was for him to feel Lloyd’s thoughts. John said, “I am not checking out.” Those aren’t the words John used when he told me; he said, “I am not—I am getting well,” and he was determined to get well. It didn’t matter what doctors said or anyone else. He was determined and, of course, he was very gracious. He always said the McGarey’s helped him so much, but we knew that it was John’s mind and John’s will.

Bruce In follow up, in the early ‘80’s when Jim Gordon was doing quite a bit of channeling work with John, John would talk about how there were going to be three great books that would be important, almost the global transformation of the future of humanity. And those were the Bible, A Course in Miracles, and a third book to be written perhaps by Jim Gordon. In those days, the theme was very much discussed about soul awareness, so my question goes to this level. In your conversations with John, did he ever share with you that he was still reading the Bible?

Judy Oh yes, of course.

Bruce He was still a student of the Bible before he received the Course?

Judy Oh yes, certainly. In fact, he was comparing the Bible and the Course in one of his groups. He used to call it his spiritual Board, right Bruce?

Bruce Yes.

Judy The people he was bringing along. I loved his language. He said, “I’m bringing them along.” What he really meant is, I’m on a journey and I’ve invited them to come too. I gave a little presentation on the Course and how it came and what it says; he had already introduced it to them, but they were also studying the Bible. There was no problem in his mind with studying the Bible still, and the Course, because he had a different concept of the Bible; he said the Course helped him put the Bible into context, because it certainly possessed some of the great truths of the world. No question about it, particularly the New Testament. But not understanding our nature, meaning not looking at it in a sense of non-duality, it was hard to recognize some of the concepts.

He thought that the Course enlightened and transformed the Bible for him, and reinterpreted it in a way that didn’t negate the Bible, but just said, That was 2,000 years ago and this is today. We have a whole different language today, not just many different world languages, but the language of psychology. Look what we’ve learned in the last hundred years about the mind; and the mind was so important to John, and the idea that the Course was mind training. That’s exactly what it calls itself. It’s a course in mind training; and John had already taken Silva Mind Control. You could see the progression for him. You can connect the dots of his interests and how one followed the other, quite neatly but unexpectedly, of course.

The Bible was always important to John, but not as a working document. I once told someone, very early in the days when I was very naïve and didn’t quite understand A Course in Miracles, that the Bible tells us to love thy neighbor as thyself, but nowhere does it say how. A Course in Miracles is a how-to book. And I think early on John saw that, too, because the stress on forgiveness as the road to recognizing your highest self was like post-Biblical. I have to give this more thought, but off the top of my head that is the way in which we discussed it, the way in which his mind was engaging at that time with mine.

Bruce I’m also mindful of the time and your energy level. I wonder, Larry or Priscilla, if you would want to weigh in at this point, or if we should just schedule subsequent meetings?

Priscilla I think scheduling a subsequent meeting would be wonderful.

Judy Fine with me.

Tom You’ve got more in your notes Judy, don’t you?

Judy I don't know. All I know is I'm doing my best.

Priscilla Oh, I think it's wonderful how different things are triggering really good memories.

Bruce This is unbelievably helpful.

Priscilla It really is, Judy.

Judy I'm glad it is because, mostly, I feel it's John's presence. I said to him last night--I was looking again at the notes he made. I said, "For goodness sakes. Why did you have to write in such a cramped hand style? I can hardly figure out what you're saying." And I had the feeling in my mind, "Oh, come on, try harder."

But I'm trying hard. I do not want to approach any of these subjects with any sense of confabulation. I do not want to make up what John was thinking or what he was saying. I very consistently take my own meditative time before we talk and ask for that guidance, and ask please have it come through me and correct any of the mistakes I might be making. I'm in deep water here, when I try to recollect what a man was thinking. He was a very brilliant man, very deep thinking, and very strong. When I said, "I don't know if I can really do this part on the Course, do it with justice for John," my husband said, "You think you're doing it? You don't think he's there controlling it?" And I had to laugh because I asked him to, so he probably is.

Bruce We have the whole period between 1976 and 1981 still to do.

Judy Okay, that won't be as long. Sometimes you have friendships, or relationships, with people and they're lifetime friendships. I did with John—but the intense time of our relationship, where we were really partners in each other's minds, that was all around the early period and the beginning of the Course, going on for about a year or two after. Then the Institute started to take over, or the Foundation started to take over his daily activities and his thinking, his thoughts, his preparations, his planning. Although he told me about it, it was very different. He was then working on a major project with other people, and his time was consumed by that; he knew he didn't have too much time and he wanted it done. My part that I've given you so far, and perhaps for the next session, is going to be much richer than it will be about how the Board was founded, what John thought about the various positions on the Board, what had to be represented, what kind of thinking had to be represented on the Board.

Those we did discuss; but after a couple of years we didn't, really discuss the Course too much, because we were both busy living it. We did report our triumphs; when something really wonderful happened we would say, "I finally

got over that, I finally let go of that attitude, or my relationship with so and so is finally healed and there's only love there." Those kinds of things we would discuss.

Tom You said you came to Kalamazoo and did some teaching the Course, too?

Judy Yes.

Tom So there's a story there. We're light on the stories about John and the Course in Miracles in Kalamazoo, and also the Monday night group in general, so if you have a story to tell . . .

Judy I do.

Tom Yes.

Bruce Following the theme of chronology, there's a lot more to the story and maybe that would be the way to follow this, and then circle back with questions. Would we be able to schedule something for next week and then the week after? Can you handle one a week?

Judy Sure.